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10th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 25 September 2001, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sevilla Somoza (Nicaragua), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Mr. Kastrup (Germany): Later this afternoon, our Belgian colleague is going to speak on behalf of the European Union. I would like to make some additional remarks. Let me begin by thanking the Secretary-General and his staff for their thorough and detailed report. This report impressively shows the work done by the United Nations across a broad array of responsibilities. It includes new and fascinating chapters on recent developments in the work of the United Nations.

The opening of this fifty-sixth General Assembly has been postponed owing to the tragic events here in New York, in Washington and in Pennsylvania. The work of the United Nations came to a halt — but only for a few hours. The Security Council then stated unanimously in its seminal resolution 1368 (2001) that the terrorist attacks perpetrated against the people of the United States of America present a threat to international peace and security, thus confirming a legal basis for resolute action against the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of the attacks. The General Assembly in its first resolution, after the tragic events in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, condemned those unprecedented and barbaric terrorist acts.

"Achieving peace and security" is the title of the first chapter of the Secretary-General's report. Peace and security are at stake, as the faceless and barbaric acts of terrorism were directed against the very fabric that defines our nations: respect for human life and human dignity and the values of liberty, tolerance, democracy and peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Chancellor Schröder said in the German Parliament a couple of days ago that the issue is not a clash of civilizations. The issue is whether there will be civilization in this one world or not. The attacks are the expression of a criminal mindset, which can target any of our nations, regardless of faith or social order. There must be no doubt that there is no political or religious justification for terrorist violence. And no Member State of the United Nations should protect or harbour those criminals.

The leaders of the European Union met last Friday in an extraordinary session. They discussed ways and means of integrating as many countries as possible in a worldwide system of security and prosperity. Issues addressed included the provision of incentives within the framework of development cooperation to States that cooperate in the battle against terrorism. A particular priority in this context is the creation of a basis for political and economic stabilization in the crisis regions. Above all, we must

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do everything we can to achieve a breakthrough for peace in the Middle East.

European Union member States realize that terrorism must be fought on a global front. The European Union has, therefore, called for the broadest possible global coalition against terrorism, under the United Nations aegis. The United Nations has a central role in coordinating and reinvigorating the international response to terrorism. We trust that the Security Council and this General Assembly will live up to this role. Members of the United Nations can rely on the cooperation of my delegation in combating terrorism. We are ready to enter into negotiations on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

The Secretary-General has most pertinently underlined that the United Nations must have the courage to recognize that there are common aims, but also common enemies. Our work on different aspects of globalization, and our desire to find answers to the challenges of globalization, must include a resolve to globally fight terrorism. Our work of implementing the Millennium Declaration should give high priority to our commitments in paragraph 9 to take concerted action against international terrorism and to accede as soon as possible to all the relevant international conventions.

The United Nations must engage its full potential to identify and eventually eradicate the roots of terrorism. Development questions should therefore be addressed ever more vigorously. In this respect, we must make sure that international terrorism must not infringe on our common efforts and commitments aimed at promoting sustainable development, an equitable distribution of the benefits of globalization and the achievement of the millennium goals, above all poverty eradication.

We must work for the full and timely implementation of the plan of action adopted during the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, hosted by the European Union in Brussels in May. We must ensure the success of the ongoing process, as well as of the International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Monterrey next spring, and we must strive for a successful, development-oriented round of the World Trade Organization in Doha in November.

The Secretary-General has widely stated in his report, with a particular view to Central Asia, that the search for peaceful solutions to regional conflicts, which all too often are a breeding ground for terrorism, must be identified. We should accelerate our pace towards the establishment of the International Criminal Court, as a timely response to combat impunity for crimes against humanity. The dialogue among and within civilizations must be promoted as an antidote to blind and savage terror, bigotry and hatred. And the plight of those who suffer from terrorism, be it as immediate victims or refugees, must be addressed.

Let us use this session of the General Assembly to combine our efforts to make the United Nations work and to take the necessary steps to implement the Millennium Declaration, including its reform package for the United Nations. Streamlining our work and making the United Nations more responsive to global needs and pressing problems remains high on the agenda. Germany stands ready to work in the General Assembly towards a successful fifty-sixth session.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): Before delivering my statement on the agenda item before us, I should like once again, on behalf of the people and the Government of Indonesia, to express to the people and the Government of the United States our deep feelings of sorrow at the tragic events that took place on 11 September this year.

Our grief at this unconscionable loss of life and material devastation has no bounds, as the attacks took the lives of people from many countries, including Indonesia. We strongly condemn such terrorist attacks and horrific acts of premeditated violence. Our deepest condolences go to the bereaved families, and our sympathy goes to the countless victims affected by these terrible events.

Indonesia welcomes the annual report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, which offers a comprehensive review of the activities that have been carried out during the past year. It shows how the mandates of the Member States are being fulfilled in responding to the new challenges of a changing world and embodies ideas and proposals that could contribute to the further effectiveness and strengthening of the United Nations. It also depicts the functioning of the Organization and its multidimensional aspects and the challenges the international community must confront at the beginning of the millennium. From the details contained therein we can see both its strength and

weaknesses, as well as a clear direction for the United Nations in the future.

The Secretary-General reminds us that peace and security remain an essential part of the Organization's global responsibility and rightly highlights development cooperation as an overriding challenge since a majority of the world population is mired in poverty. He has warned that in the era of globalization critical issues cannot be resolved by States acting alone, but on the basis of cooperation, partnerships and burden-sharing among the Member States, the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society.

Thus, when we speak of globalization, we speak of threats, weapons, communication, environment, economy and other pertinent issues in a global context. All this means far-reaching changes are taking place in world affairs. No nation is immune to them. They require that we make fundamental adjustments in our approaches to global issues of concern and interest to all nations through a strengthened and democratized United Nations.

Indonesia's participation in the Organization has been predicated on a firm commitment to the principles and objectives of the Charter. Beyond this, however, we have attached particular importance to multilateralism, whether regional or global, in peacefully resolving the myriad problems confronted by the international community.

My delegation is gratified to note the reference made in paragraph 37 of the report to the ongoing endeavours being made by my Government in dealing with a wide range of issues facing our nation. We regard our multi-party democracy and the existence of human rights as the central legitimizing tenets of good governance. We are now undergoing a profound democratic process based on openness, tolerance and inclusiveness.

In realizing the goals of a political system responsive to the interests of our people, in accelerating economic recovery and in preserving social harmony, we have naturally attached high priority to the preservation of our national unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty, which precludes fissiparous tendencies. The national vision of Indonesia in the millennium would be the preservation of democratic pluralism and cultural diversity and the creation of a modern State that will provide opportunities for its people regardless of ethnicity, religion or other differences.

My delegation agrees with the importance given in the report to conflict prevention and peacemaking as an integral part of the Organization's concerted efforts to maintain international peace and security. This dual approach would uphold the core mandate of the United Nations and its mission to forestall conflicts, review mechanisms and institutions and formulate a strategy for protecting humanity from indiscriminate violence and armed conflicts. The vital role of all parts of the United Nations system in reducing and eradicating the underlying causes of conflicts has to be acknowledged. Appropriately, the crucial role of regional and subregional organizations in preventive and peacemaking strategies is recognized in the report, as conflicts are inseparable from their regional contexts. We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to take a number of initiatives to forestall conflicts and to build an edifice of peacemaking, in particular, through the development of regional prevention strategies together with the various agencies of the United Nations.

In this regard, the report has drawn our attention to the modalities adopted by the United Nations in Africa and elsewhere. These include, inter alia, identifying potential sources of conflict, promoting democratization, assisting in the political, developmental and humanitarian fields, demobilizing and disarming combatants, fostering national reconciliation among the warring parties and demonstrating the utility of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations. Taken together, they offer some valuable lessons in the efforts spearheaded by the United Nations to achieve the twin objectives of conflict prevention and peacemaking.

With regard to disarmament, the report has noted the uncertainties concerning strategic relationships and the persistence of diverse views on priorities. Consequently, there is little doubt that the question of nuclear disarmament has entered a new, dangerous era, as commitments undertaken at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons have remained unfulfilled. Further compounding the situation is the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament. Meanwhile, it is disturbing to learn from the report that global military expenditure has registered a steep increase in many parts of the world. These ominous developments call for the resumption of negotiations

on the priority issues of disarmament, with the determination to reach agreement.

As for the economic sphere, we fully support the Secretary-General's assertion, in paragraph 8 of the report, that "development cooperation is a solid foundation on which to build stability, economic justice and social development". Certainly the work of the Organization in assisting development and helping to eradicate poverty and inequality will contribute greatly to establishing the building blocks of sustainable peace.

The defining moment for the United Nations in the field of economic development in the past year was probably the historic reaffirmation by Member States of the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. In a world of rapid globalization and economic integration, flexibility is imperative. We therefore agree with the report that, in meeting the new demands on the United Nations, the tradition of innovation should be preserved while the principles of the Charter are maintained. Thus, in addressing the unbridled forces of the market unleashed by globalization, including a widening economic gap, we fully concur with the Secretary-General that unprecedented levels of financial commitment and international cooperation will be required. I would even go further to say that if such an increase in international cooperation is not forthcoming, the economic gap will continue to widen, the digital divide will not be bridged and the plight of three quarters of humankind will further deteriorate, resulting in further poverty and deprivation for the developing countries and instability for all.

In addressing such global problems, we could not agree more with the Secretary-General that the efforts to render globalization inclusive and equitable will pose a daunting challenge in the years ahead and that if the goals of development and poverty eradication are to be met, economic growth must be accelerated in the developing countries. Positive steps taken over the past year in that direction include the cooperation of the United Nations in the formulation of national poverty-reduction strategies in 60 countries and its help in the writing of comprehensive poverty-reduction strategy papers in others. Such positive steps can be clearly seen in the activities of the United Nations Development Group, under the chairmanship of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the prime agency of the United Nations for promoting development.

It is encouraging that public sector management programmes in 78 countries have resulted in civil service reform, national action to tackle corruption, the promotion of transparency and the adoption by some Governments of results-based management to advance public sector efficiency and accountability. We fully support these programmes and consider them to be extremely relevant to Indonesia in its current efforts to build strong democratic institutions and processes.

In this connection, UNDP, at its Executive Board meeting in New York early this month, endorsed the second country cooperation framework for Indonesia (CCF). We appreciate the way in which the CCF has been prepared, involving broad-based consultations and discussions inclusive of government, civil society, the international community and the United Nations. Indonesia's national priorities and four basic development goals were well reflected in the process of formulating the second CCF. These include the legitimization of democratic governance, poverty reduction and institutionalized mechanisms for managing both social and ethnic conflicts and environmental sustainability.

In this context, we commend the full involvement of the United Nations in the forthcoming International Conference on Financing for Development and its preparatory process. We also are thankful to the Secretary-General for his report on this issue, which includes a comprehensive set of 87 recommendations on all key aspects of financing for development. We also commend the Secretary-General for appointing the High-level Panel on Financing for Development, chaired by Mr. Ernesto Zedillo. The report of the Panel, together with other input at the national level, intergovernmental initiatives at regional and international levels and substantive contributions from other major stakeholders, should greatly help to enhance understanding and facilitate the tackling by Member countries of the issues and concepts of the International Conference on Financing for Development.

With regard to access to information and communication technologies (ICT), we agree with the Secretary-General that such access is an important instrument for reaping the potential benefits of globalization. Thus, we welcome the launching of the

United Nations ICT Task Force, which represents a major outcome of the 2000 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. We fully support the activities and mission of the Task Force and trust that it will vigorously promote accessibility and connectivity for people from the developing countries, with particular attention being paid to the rural poor and small- and medium-sized enterprises.

As for the critically important issue of sustainable development, we are pleased to note from the report that numerous initiatives and activities have been undertaken by communities at all levels in implementing Agenda 21 and the relevant outcomes of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. It is also encouraging that a growing number of companies have adopted sustainable development as an essential element of corporate stewardship. In this regard, we believe that all progress achieved on normative and institutional issues should be coupled with the full implementation of commitments undertaken, particularly by the developed countries, as stipulated in Agenda 21.

Indonesia, as a developing country that has developed its own national Agenda 21 and sectoral Agenda 21, considers the support of the international community and the United Nations system to be crucial if we are to achieve our common objectives. Furthermore, since poverty and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption are considered to be overriding causes of environmental degradation, it is important that a bottom-up approach has been taken to the preparatory process for the World Summit on Sustainable Development, as that will best enable us to identify ways and means of addressing those problems. Likewise, the launching of a poverty and environment initiative will be of crucial importance in identifying practical policy measures to advance the twin goals of poverty reduction and environmental regeneration.

With regard to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in September 2002, Indonesia would like to reaffirm its full support for the overarching goals of reinvigorating the global commitments to sustainable development at the highest level and of ensuring the full implementation of Agenda 21. While taking note of the progress that has been achieved at local, national, subregional and regional levels, we are of the view that there is an urgent need to ensure that the approach will be able to identify progress achieved and constraints faced, as well as to provide practical and applicable solutions for achieving the full implementation of Agenda 21.

In this context, we believe that international cooperation, including that secured through the promotion of partnership, is crucial in ensuring the achievement of our common goals. Moreover, as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit, Indonesia is deeply committed to the success of the preparations in the lead-up to a successful Summit. In the same vein, we share the view expressed in the report that there is a need to ensure the implementation of all targets set by all of the heads of State, as outlined in the Millennium Declaration.

In the area of humanitarian relief, the report appropriately notes the need to achieve greater efficiency on the part of the aid community. In the days ahead, this need will not diminish, but may, in fact, become more acute. Furthermore, my delegation would like to note the progress that has been made in recent years in protecting civilians threatened during armed conflict. That progress must not be lost, and every effort must be made to safeguard and protect civilian populations, particularly women and children.

Indonesia, for its part, will continue to contribute towards achieving what the Secretary-General has termed a culture of protection. We look forward to strengthening our relationships at the national level, where Indonesia is still in great need of support, as well as at the international level, in support of the principles of international humanitarian law. Thus, in providing humanitarian assistance during armed conflicts, we must take fully into account the continuum from relief to development and the transition from conflict to peace. As has been clearly indicated, failure to plan for and improve the transition between relief and development can undo short-term results. We would therefore like to reaffirm our belief that for disaster management to be effective, it should take place in the context of poverty eradication and development programmes.

In his report, the Secretary-General also touches on the issues of immunization and health. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to note that, although the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly has been postponed, our efforts on behalf of children must continue to move forward. Indonesia will continue to work towards achieving a world fit for children. In that context, I am pleased to

report that Indonesia has signed the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We would like to applaud the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for its tireless efforts in promoting the implementation of the Convention and for ensuring the survival, protection and development of children everywhere, including in Indonesia.

Indonesia hopes that during these uncertain times the aspirations of those in vulnerable groups will not be overlooked. The Second World Assembly on Ageing, to be held next year, will offer an important opportunity to update and refocus our attention on this issue after 20 years. Likewise, issues relating to the disabled and to youth must also not be lost in the days ahead.

The Secretary-General has also appropriately touched on the issue of gender and population, noting the relationship between women's inequality and their health, education and social and economic participation. Of equal importance, mention is made of the zero-tolerance policy on violence against women — a policy that Indonesia has adopted and fully endorses.

In the Millennium Declaration, adopted last September, our heads of State and Government solemnly pledged to take concerted action against international terrorism and called upon States to accede as soon as possible to all of the relevant international conventions. Indonesia would like to underscore that terrorism increasingly threatens our democratic processes and national security. Hence, we look forward to the forthcoming deliberations in the General Assembly leading to the adoption of concrete measures of international cooperation to combat global terrorism.

Finally, we are aware of the unprecedented circumstances under which the general debate has been postponed and the consequent dislocation of the regular session of the General Assembly. This has no doubt necessitated a rearrangement and readjustment of the schedule and of the agenda of the current session, with the cooperation and coordination of the President, the Member States and the Secretary-General. We remain hopeful that this will not necessarily constitute a precedent and that the future work of the General Assembly can be conducted according to schedule.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Allow me at the outset to extend to Mr. Han our warm congratulations on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. I would like to assure him of the full cooperation and support of the Namibian delegation.

It is significant that this body is considering the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization at a time when the crucial role of the United Nations will become even more evident, as the world community ponders how to deal effectively with the scourge of terrorism following the barbaric and indiscriminate terrorist attacks on New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on 11 September of this year. We are saddened by the loss of innocent lives and the destruction of property.

I would like, therefore, to take this opportunity to express once again our profound sympathy and heartfelt condolences to the Government and the people of the United States of America, and to the bereaved families in particular. Namibia strongly condemns this heinous crime and demands that the perpetrators be brought to justice.

My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and all-encompassing report. In our view, the report provides an important reflection on the significant achievements and other essential ongoing activities of the United Nations. It also points to the problems and difficulties encountered during the period under review. We subscribe to many of the thoughtful ideas of the Secretary-General on the efforts to enhance and strengthen the role of the United Nations, but, at the same time, we share the deep concerns he has about menaces such as conflicts and HIV/AIDS.

We are considering this report in the wake of the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, in which our heads of State and Government pledged their collective resolve and responsibility to eradicate poverty, underdevelopment and disease, and to uphold the principles of human dignity, equality and equity at the global level. In this connection, we note with gratitude the Secretary-General's road map, which offers a programme for the implementation of the objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

As time does not permit me to deal with all the important issues in the report of the Secretary-General, I wish to comment on some of them which are of particular concern to my delegation.

On conflict prevention and peacemaking, my delegation agrees with the importance that is placed on the concept of conflict prevention, especially in the light of the numerous conflicts afflicting the African continent.

We support the Secretary-General in his efforts to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention. While it is the primary responsibility of the United Nations to prevent armed conflict, in accordance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, we believe that regional and subregional organizations also play a crucial role. We therefore call for improved coordination of efforts between the United Nations and regional organizations. In this connection, proactive approaches to conflicts have already resulted in positive results in a number of instances where multiple causes were threatening to explode into much wider, devastating conflicts, which had the potential to destabilize whole regions.

However, as correctly noted by the Secretary-General, the development and humanitarian agencies of the United Nations system, together with the Bretton Woods institutions, have a vital role to play in creating a peaceful environment, as well as in addressing the root causes of conflicts at early stages. The international community must furthermore begin to match rhetoric with action. In this regard, my delegation looks forward to a further discussion of the important recommendations by the Secretary-General in his report on the prevention of armed conflict.

With regard to Africa, we agree with the Secretary-General that "efforts to enhance African peacekeeping capacity cannot become a justification for reduced engagement in the continent" (*A/56/1, para. 49*). The United Nations and the international community as a whole should continue to provide the necessary resources to peacekeeping operations in Africa, just as it does with peacekeeping operations elsewhere.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the implementation of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement is progressing smoothly. The ceasefire has been holding for some time now, and the parties are withdrawing in line with their commitments under the Kampala plan and the Harare sub-plans for the disengagement and redeployment of forces. Furthermore, there is remarkable progress with regard to the inter-Congolese dialogue.

Despite all these positive developments, phase II of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) has not yet been completed. My delegation is of the view that in order to prevent a vacuum in the current favourable conditions, it has become critical for the deployment of phase III of MONUC to be approved speedily, with due consideration of the complexity and enormity of the peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. At the same time, it is important for the international community to assist the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in their efforts to rebuild their country.

With regard to the situation in Western Sahara, my delegation has noted with deep concern the proposed framework agreement on the status of Western Sahara. I wish to reiterate the position of my delegation that the question of Western Sahara is a question of decolonization. Therefore, the aspirations of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and national independence cannot be compromised. We therefore believe that the United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara, which has been accepted by both parties, remains the only legal instrument through which to resolve the question of Western Sahara. Efforts should therefore be made to implement it and not to undermine it.

As stated by the Secretary-General, the HIV/AIDS pandemic remains a catastrophe of global proportions. While we agree that the disease is spreading with alarming speed, it is most encouraging that the international community is fighting back and that, in their Millennium Declaration, world leaders resolved to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS by 2015. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the successful conclusion of the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS. We commend the Secretary-General for the initiative to establish a Global AIDS and health fund aimed at mobilizing resources to address the epidemic. We trust that the international community will contribute generously to this fund. We support the establishment of a high-level inter-agency task force on HIV/AIDS with the responsibility of strengthening coordination within the United Nations system.

Development and poverty eradication remain an important priority for the United Nations and individual countries. The African continent bears a disproportionate burden in overcoming these problems

of great priority. In his acceptance speech, the President made the development of Africa one of his priorities during his tenure of office as President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. We wholeheartedly welcome that commitment. For its part, Africa is showing its resolve to overcome its development challenges. The adoption of the New African Initiative by the Organization of African Unity is proof in this regard. My delegation is extremely gratified by the decision of the Economic and Social Council to rally behind the unified framework that African leaders have launched. We call on the rest of the international community to do the same.

My delegation attaches great importance to the upcoming high-level International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, which we believe should be convened within the context of the commitments made at the Millennium Summit. We equally attach great importance to the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development to take place next year in South Africa. This will afford the international community an excellent opportunity to review in a comprehensive manner whether we, the Member States, have implemented fully the commitments we made at the Rio Summit. My delegation will continue to participate actively in the preparatory processes and looks forward to a positive outcome of these meetings, which must fully take into account the needs of all developing countries.

Once again, my delegation wishes to assure the President of our support during his presidency, and we look forward to actively participating in the rest of the work of this session.

Mr. Sharma (India): Allow me to convey our congratulations to the President on his assuming the office of the President of the General Assembly. We are confident that his wise and able leadership will guide us through a session that has begun under a terrible shadow. We also place on record our appreciation for Mr. Harri Holkeri's stewardship of the last General Assembly. May I also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization and for his tireless efforts in promoting peace and development.

11 September was a dark day for humanity. We grieve over the loss of so many innocent lives. We share the pain, the outrage and the revulsion of the people of the United States at the barbaric and senseless attack on them.

Nearly half of the membership of the United Nations is embraced in that grievous and colossal tragedy. We know, from our own bitter experience, the toll terrorism exacts, particularly from open, liberal, pluralistic and democratic societies. Over the last decade, tens of thousands of our citizens — at work, at prayer, in schools and in hospitals — have died at the hands of terrorists; 250 more died on 11 September in the World Trade Center. The human cost exacted from the murdered and the maimed is incalculable. Left unchecked, the cancer of terrorism will spread, bringing more deaths and more destruction to more countries. Condemnations do not touch terrorism. Its roots run deep and wide; they can be uprooted only through global cooperation and concerted action against terrorists as well as those who aid, abet, finance, train, harbour or in any manner assist them. There is no justification for terrorism, and none should be accepted.

We would suggest that future reports of the Secretary-General should focus more closely on the issue of terrorism, given the universal condemnation and commitment to eradicate this evil that we have seen. We also hope that the comprehensive convention against international terrorism now under negotiation can be finalized at this session of the General Assembly. Its early adoption and entry into force will provide a framework for international action against terrorism.

Armed conflict is the traditional threat to peace, prosperity and security. Studies show that the number of armed conflicts has dropped in the last few years, but they still create instability and inflict suffering on millions. While we agree with many of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the prevention of armed conflict, we believe that action is required to strengthen and spread democratic governance, to remove poverty and to seriously address the question of disarmament. Above all, there must be respect for the principles of inter-State relations and a commitment to settle disputes through peaceful negotiations.

Integral to our efforts to end terrorism and prevent armed conflict is the denial to the perpetrators of access to arms and ammunition. We share the Secretary-General's assessment that the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a significant first step, but we must

urgently and fully implement it while building a consensus on the outstanding issues, particularly on the supply of weapons to non-State actors, the risks of which are self-evident. We call on all States to join in keeping weapons out of the hands and the reach of terrorists and non-State actors.

But while we address the problem of small arms we must remember that complete and global nuclear disarmament continues to remain an unfulfilled promise. The Secretary-General is right in reminding us that at the Millennium Summit our leaders resolved to strive to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. We will look carefully at the strategies proposed in the road map for the implementation of the Millennium Declaration.

We have followed very closely, and supported, the Secretary-General's efforts to improve the Secretariat's ability to support peacekeeping operations. We continue to be among the leading contributors of troops and police to those operations. But peacekeeping cannot be a substitute for the task of nation-building. Therefore, while we support the proper coordination of all elements in a complex peacekeeping operation, we continue to believe that the mandates of a peacekeeping operation should not be confused with those of a post-conflict peace-building mission. Blurring the distinction between peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building not only leads to unrealistic expectations and unachievable mandates, but also prevents a clear exit strategy for United Nations peacekeepers.

The crisis in the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone last year clearly reinforced the need for a strengthened partnership between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. While we are aware that the Council has tried to address this problem since then in its resolutions, unless the recommendations of the Brahimi Panel — which have been amplified in proposals made by a number of troop-contributing countries — are implemented, there are few prospects for such a partnership emerging. The absence of cooperation between the Council and troop-contributing countries has been a bane of United Nations peacekeeping and needs to be comprehensively addressed at the earliest.

While terrorism and armed conflict pose dramatic and violent threats, endemic poverty is the single most important challenge confronting humanity. In the Millennium Declaration our leaders resolved to reduce by half the number of people who live in absolute poverty by 2015. The *Rural Poverty Report 2001* of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) finds that this goal will not be met, as 30 million people must escape poverty each year if it is to be met, but only 10 million are able to do so. With a much sharper focus on poverty eradication, the United Nations must strive to ensure that justice is done for the members of the world's population who earn less than $2 a day. We note what it has been possible to do in the United Nations system so far, but we believe we need to do much more.

In Africa the failure to eradicate poverty has been the most acute. The rate of poverty eradication there, according to IFAD, is six times too slow to meet the 2015 deadline. The New African Initiative, adopted on 11 July 2001 at the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Summit, centred on African ownership and called on the rest of the world to complement its efforts. We note from the Secretary-General's report that entities of the United Nations have remained deeply involved in a wide range of African development issues during the period under review. In our view, it is also important to ensure that African priorities and concerns are fully reflected in that engagement and that the process does not become donor-driven.

Where have the development resources of the United Nations system been diverted to? The United Nations Development Programme, the flagship of the development efforts of the United Nations system, is mentioned in 24 paragraphs of the Secretary General's report — in those dealing with crisis and post-conflict situations, human rights, good governance and the Global Compact — but, curiously, never once in the context of technical assistance for capacity-building in areas that would have a direct impact on poverty eradication.

We need to work collectively to ensure the success of the International Conference on Financing for Development, which is described as a unique intergovernmental process in the Secretary-General's report. For the first time, we will address development in a holistic manner from the perspective of finance. We must use the opportunity provided by the Conference to establish concrete measures and mechanisms that will ensure adequate, secure and predictable financial resources for development. An

equitable basis for global development has become the crucial requirement in the management of the process of globalization.

Linked to the outcome of that Conference will be the success of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, where the international community will identify accomplishments and constraints in the implementation of Agenda 21 in the last 10 years. We believe that the United Nations system should help Member States and regional and other bodies contribute to the preparatory process.

We are of the view that the integrity of the three pillars of sustainable development must be maintained, and that environment cannot be de-linked from development. The global partnership forged at Rio is based on that principle. The discussions under way on international environmental governance, mentioned in the report, should take that into account. We believe that the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements is essential for the protection of our common environment.

The advancement and empowerment of women is an important goal of the United Nations. It is a pity, therefore, that there is nothing in the report on the progress made in building on the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, on women, which was held last year. We are also mystified by paragraph 158, which claims that a non-governmental organization introduced a resolution at the March 2000 session of the Commission on Human Rights. We thought that only Member States introduced resolutions. We hope that has not changed.

While the initiatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) are important, the report restricts itself only to efforts to monitor human rights. On the promotional side, an area that is important to the developing world, the report is silent, as it is on resolutions addressed to the Secretariat, for example on the issue of equitable geographical representation in OHCHR.

Equally important, the sections of the report on OHCHR's activities do not reflect constraints developing countries face in generating resources to implement various rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights. There is too much stress on the legal aspect of international instruments rather than the developmental aspect. There is an undue emphasis on the question of legal instruments, rather than on the progressive attainment of the goals of human dignity and freedoms, through the promotion and protection not only of civil and political rights, but also of economic, social and cultural rights.

The United Nations role in providing humanitarian assistance is important. The report states that the growing need for this assistance requires greater efficiency in relief efforts. This may be so, but it misses the more important point that additional resources are required. The report notes that, as of June 2001, less than 33 per cent of the requests listed in the consolidated appeals for 2001 had been met. What is, however, even more troubling is that this seems to confirm a trend. In 1994, 80 per cent of the requirements were met; only 59 per cent were met last year.

The report refers to the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as an over-arching framework, but these do not have inter-governmental approval. The guiding principles for humanitarian assistance outlined in Section 1 of the annex of resolution 46/182, however, do have such approval. We therefore find it surprising that there is no mention of them in the report. The Economic and Social Council has this year again noted that Member States reaffirmed the importance and continuing validity of the framework provided by the guiding principles established in resolution 46/182. These are what should guide the Organization's work.

We have taken note of what the United Nations has done over the past year to harness information and communication technologies to advance the millennium development goals. We recognize, as does the last Human Development Report, that the belief that there is a technological bullet that can solve illiteracy, ill-health and economic failure reflects scant understanding of real poverty. A judicious blend of basic social, education and health services with the development of both brick and "click" industries is required for sustained human development and poverty reduction. Information and communication technology (ICT) is important in this context. Our own experience attests to this. We, therefore, strongly commend the Secretary-General on the establishment of the ICT Task Force. It can, in our view, play an invaluable role in bridging the digital divide, in fostering digital opportunity and in firmly placing ICT at the service of development for all.

On enhancing management in the Organization, we are heartened to note the Secretary-General's assertion that the United Nations is now equipped to operate more efficiently and effectively, and to make the best use of its financial and human resources.

But efficiency will not be able to make up for inadequacy of resources. We are therefore alarmed at the news from the Secretariat earlier last month at the extremely precarious financial situation and cross-borrowing from the peacekeeping account to pay salaries to staff members. We hope that the collective efforts put in by the membership of the United Nations late last year will be rewarded, and that the financial situation will improve in the next few months. We attach significance to this, as a country to which the Organization owes the largest amount of peacekeeping dues.

Lastly, while peacekeeping continues to be strengthened vigorously, including through the provision of additional post and non-post resources to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), we should, in this General Assembly, also strengthen departments that service economic and social sectors, where the biggest challenges to the international community lie.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Dr. Han Seung-soo, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea, on his assumption of the office of President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Government of Japan will fully support President Han, who brings abundant experience and keen insight to this important office. I would also like to pay high tribute to His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Finland, for his leadership as President of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. And on this occasion, I am pleased once again to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan on his reappointment as Secretary-General of the United Nations.

At the outset, I cannot but express my outrage at the series of terrorist attacks that occurred in New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on 11 September. On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to extend my most profound condolences to the victims who have left homes and families in many parts of the United States as well as in many other countries. My most sincere sympathy goes as well to the bereaved families, and indeed to all the people and the Government of the United States of America.

These acts of terror must be seen not only as assaults against the United States, but also as crimes against democracy and freedom, and more fundamentally, against humanity itself. The Member States of the United Nations must remain in strong solidarity with each other and committed to the words of Security Council resolution 1368 (2001) and General Assembly resolution 56/1 in cooperating to bring to justice those responsible for the heinous acts and to strengthen our fight against terrorism. In addition, it is our solemn responsibility to work towards the early adoption of the two remaining anti-terrorism conventions, namely, the comprehensive convention on international terrorism and the convention for the suppression of acts of nuclear terrorism.

As mentioned in the introduction of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, the Millennium Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit clearly laid out the challenges and objectives for the international community in the twenty-first century. The road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which the Secretary-General presented last week, provides guidelines for achieving those objectives. I shall therefore present Japan's views on the challenges confronting the United Nations, focusing in particular on the issues referred to in the Declaration. I would also like to take this opportunity to request President Han to convene a meeting of the General Assembly to discuss the road map.

The terrorist attacks against the United States, which I touched upon earlier, pose a new and heightened threat to international peace and security. However, the world is not yet free from more traditional threats to international security. On the Korean peninsula, for example, the old military stand-off still remains, with serious implications not only for regional but also for global security. It is for this reason that the leadership of President Kim Dae-jung of the Republic of Korea, which resulted in the historic South-North summit meeting held in June last year, is of a global significance. In the same vein, it is encouraging that with the fifth South-North ministerial meeting, which took place from 15 to 18 September, genuine progress is being made in the dialogue and

exchanges between the two parties on the Korean peninsula.

The Government of Japan will continue to support the tolerant policies of President Kim Dae-jung, which have generated this momentum. At the same time, while maintaining close cooperation with the Republic of Korea and the United States, Japan will remain steadfastly engaged in negotiations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with the aim of normalizing our diplomatic relations in such a way as to contribute to the peace and stability of North-East Asia.

In the Middle East, another hot spot with direct implications for global security, the vicious cycle of violence between Israel and Palestine has continued since last year. The ceasefire measures taken by both sides on 18 September are a welcome development, and we urge the parties concerned to get back on track to implement the Mitchell report in order to achieve genuine peace.

From Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Kosovo and East Timor, the United Nations is faced with a growing demand for peacekeeping. In view of the prospect of increased numbers and expanded scope of operations, the Japanese Government is now considering further strengthening its contributions to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Japan will also continue to lead efforts to enhance the safety and security of all personnel engaged in peace activities. Furthermore, recognizing that addressing the small arms issue is increasingly important in preventing the occurrence and the recurrence of conflicts, we are going to host an experts group meeting early next year with the aim of ensuring the steady implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Needless to say, it is imperative for us to maintain and strengthen the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. In particular, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is an important pillar of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime based on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. That regime provides a set of realistic and concrete measures towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. With this recognition, the Government of Japan will make its utmost efforts in order to attain the early entry into force of the CTBT.

This year, Japan will again submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament t[-hat will outline a concrete path towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to ask Member States to extend their support to our proposal, as they did last year.

I would also like to stress the importance of strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BWC). The new threat of globally organized terrorism, which we have witnessed here in New York, makes our task all the more urgent. I therefore hope that Member States will engage in a constructive discussion at the Fifth Review Conference in order to make the BWC more effective in the coming years.

In addition to issues relating to peace and security, the international community is faced with a wide range of global issues, such as those relating to poverty, environmental degradation, refugees and displaced people, public health, narcotic drugs and so forth. While each one of them requires the cooperation of the international community, as the Millennium Declaration has stressed, two issues — global environmental degradation and HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases — demand our urgent attention.

Negotiations to ensure that the Kyoto Protocol will go into effect in 2002 are at a critical stage. While I assure the Assembly that the Japanese Government will spare no effort to attain that broadly shared goal of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, we also believe that it is important for all States to follow the same rule as they implement measures to curb global warming. We therefore continue to seek the understanding and cooperation of all relevant countries, particularly the United States, in order to reach an agreement in time.

I would also like to stress here that it is important to adopt at the Johannesburg Summit guidelines on international environmental efforts in such areas as the utilization of scientific technologies and water issues, where additional measures are necessary.

Promoting international cooperation in combating the scourge of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases is yet another priority policy objective of Japan. On the occasion of the G-8 Summit meeting it hosted last year, the Japanese Government announced the Okinawa Infectious Disease Initiative, under which it will extend financial and technical assistance amounting to $3 billion over the next five years to help combat HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases in developing countries. More recently, Japan has committed itself to contributing $200 million to the Global AIDS and Health Fund.

We believe that in order to address the issue of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, it is important for the international community to develop a well-coordinated approach to respond to the needs of each country in a wide range of areas, including education, prevention, treatment, the establishment of sanitation systems and research and development.

In summary, what the Secretary-General refers to as the "war chest" will be essential to combat these deadly pandemics. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to make an appeal for increased support for the Global AIDS and Health Fund.

It is beyond debate that, unless the problems stemming from conflict and poverty in Africa are effectively addressed, there will be neither stability nor prosperity in the world in the twenty-first century. With this recognition, since 1993, the Government of Japan has been promoting the so-called TICAD process, the process launched by the Second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), with the aim of enhancing the ownership of the development process by the countries of Africa and their partnership with the international community. To further advance the process, in December of this year Japan will hold a ministerial meeting in Tokyo to prepare for a third TICAD summit, to be held within the next few years.

The Government of Japan welcomes the New African Initiative launched by African countries, which is indeed a strong manifestation of African countries' ownership of their own future. We look forward to having a substantive discussion at the forthcoming TICAD ministerial meeting on how the international community can best support this initiative.

Poverty, environmental destruction, infectious diseases and other issues that I have discussed are all global in scope and cannot be resolved by any one country alone. It is thus becoming increasingly important to address these issues through global cooperation. In this context, Japan advocates the importance of addressing these issues with a particular focus on human security, that is, protecting the lives and dignity of people. Human security is the basic requirement of humanity, no matter where people live.

It is our hope that the Trust Fund for Human Security, which the Japanese Government has established at the United Nations, will help advance a human-centred approach towards global issues in the years to come. We also look forward to the valuable contributions to be made by the International Commission on Human Security, co-chaired by Mrs. Sadako Ogata and Mr. Amartya Sen, which has commenced its work with the firm support of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

The debates last year during the Millennium Summit and the Millennium Assembly clearly demonstrated that an overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States support Security Council reform, including the expansion of both its permanent and non-permanent membership. Although the need is urgent and the momentum strong, we have seen no real progress towards reform this year, the eighth year of our discussions.

We have to cooperate in order to move forward on this important issue. The statement made by President Holkeri on the closing day of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly is highly significant in this context. In that statement, President Holkeri offered three suggestions, namely, that the discussion be moved to a higher political level; that Governments may want to consider approaching the goal of a comprehensive reform in a focused way and by moving forward step by step; and that the question of the veto needs to be part of these discussions.

The Government of Japan believes that these suggestions merit our thorough consideration. We also consider it advisable for our future discussions on the question of the size of the expanded Council to be part of a focused step-by-step approach towards the attainment of a final reform package.

Before concluding, I would like to draw the attention of the Assembly to the two giant screens behind this rostrum, the high-definition cameras behind representatives' seats and the two projectors on either side of the balcony. As the Assembly may recall, last

year, NHK, a Japanese public broadcasting corporation, installed this equipment on a temporary basis for the Millennium Summit and the general debate. Responding to the wishes of the Secretary-General and many Member States, NHK has generously agreed to lend the equipment to the United Nations on a permanent basis, free of charge. We all hope that this equipment will bring speakers and audience closer together, making our discussions more intimate and lively.

Mr. Aldouri (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to congratulate the President of the General Assembly and the members of the Bureau on their election to their important posts at the helm of the Assembly for this session. I should like to express our thanks and appreciation to the Secretary-General, and to pay tribute to him for his report, which is under consideration today.

The report of the Secretary-General is comprehensive, covering the activities of the United Nations over the past year. The report refers to many important issues, including the attainment of peace and security, the fulfilment of humanitarian commitments, cooperation for development, international law and order and human rights. We agree with the Secretary-General that the United Nations is trying to build a world based on justice and order. We also agree that this can be achieved only through respect for the rule of law in international affairs, as there is no other way to ensure that brute force will not prevail at the expense of the rule of law and the sovereignty and economic and political independence of States.

I should like to make several observations on the report insofar as it relates to Iraq. First, in paragraph 31 of the report, the Secretary-General expresses concern that, since December 1998, the United Nations has not been able to verify Iraq's compliance with Security Council resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction. We would like to state that this conclusion does not reflect the reality of the situation or the true concerns of the United Nations with regard to Iraq, which should be focused on the complete lifting of the unjustifiable sanctions. There can be no justification for punishing an entire people. We had hoped that the Secretary-General would ask the Security Council to lift those inhumane sanctions, as the imposition of such sanctions is a practice of the Security Council that greatly detracts from the credibility of the United Nations and has transformed it into a tool of American foreign policy, which is hostile to Iraq.

Secondly, the Secretary-General has expressed concern about the halting of monitoring activities since 16 December 1998. However, he has not expressed any concern about the aggression unleashed against Iraq from 16 to 19 December 1998 by two permanent members of the Security Council, the United States and the United Kingdom. This aggression took many innocent civilian victims and destroyed numerous civilian installations and facilities, such as hospitals, desalination plants, schools and homes. The United Nations has not taken any measures against that blatant aggression — the State terrorism carried out by those two States.

On the other hand, several officials from the former United Nations Special Commission, as well as Commission documents, acknowledge that the Commission and the International Atomic Energy Agency were used by the United States, the United Kingdom and the Zionist entity as a means of spying on Iraq. They also acknowledge that crises were staged to justify the continuous aggression against Iraq by those States, which falsified facts relating to earlier Iraqi programmes, even going so far as to use the Special Commission to contaminate remaining Iraqi warheads with VX chemicals.

Yet the United Nations — following American policy, which is inimical to Iraq — has not taken any measures to investigate this shameful exploitation of its work and mechanisms, nor has it taken any steps to bring justice to Iraq; to halt the use of United Nations mechanisms to harm it; or to punish those who are responsible for harming it.

Thirdly, all fair-minded States — including three of the permanent members of the Security Council — have stated that the file on the disarmament of Iraq has been closed, and that the time has come to implement paragraph 14 of Security Council resolution 687 (1991), on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, and paragraph 22, on the lifting of the sanctions against Iraq. Those two paragraphs have not yet been implemented. Instead, the United States and Britain have left no stone unturned in the process of rewriting Security Council resolutions, through, for example, the adoption of resolution 1284 (1999), whose very authors recognized

its inapplicability and which itself was not a solution. That resolution, in effect, was stillborn.

An attempt was made to bring about the adoption of a resolution on so-called smart sanctions, which are actually intended to tighten sanctions against Iraq and to exempt the Security Council from fulfilling its obligations to Iraq — obligations that are set out in its own resolutions, in particular resolution 661 (1990) and resolution 687 (1991).

Fourthly, since 1991 the United States and Britain have imposed no-fly zones on Iraq through a unilateral resolution and have used military power to enforce them. They attack Iraqi civilian installations and homes on a daily basis, and they have carried out widespread military aggression five times since 1991. This unilateral use of force is a continuous, flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations.

However, once again, the United Nations has taken no steps to put an end to it, despite the fact that the Secretary-General on more than one occasion has stated that there is no basis in the relevant Security Council resolutions for the imposition of no-fly zones in Iraq.

With regard to the question of missing persons, the Secretary-General has called for Iraq's cooperation with a "high-level coordinator" to return all Kuwaiti nationals and nationals of third States to their homeland. We regret that the report of the Secretary-General has ignored the numerous Iraqi initiatives to resolve the question of the Iraqi, Saudi, Kuwaiti and other missing persons, the most recent of which was the letter (S/2001/804) sent by the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the Secretary-General on 16 August 2001, in which Iraq expressed the wish to resume the work of the Tripartite Commission on missing persons, under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and with the participation of those States that hold files of missing persons.

The report of the Secretary-General has also overlooked Iraq's initiative to address the question of Iraqi, Saudi and Kuwaiti missing persons in a direct bilateral framework or in the framework of the League of Arab States in coordination with the ICRC.

A coordinator has been appointed to ascertain the fate of Kuwaiti and Saudi missing persons, but the situation of Iraqi missing persons is being ignored, despite the fact that their number is double that of the other two groups combined. This is a blatant example of the double standard used in Security Council resolutions vis-à-vis Iraq, even in cases of humanitarian nature.

The question of missing persons is a humanitarian one and requires cooperation on the part of us all to ascertain their fate, regardless of their nationality. Yet resolution 1284 (1999), which was stillborn, overlooked that fact and dealt only with Kuwaiti missing persons, disregarding those from Iraq, even though international mechanisms, established by the Geneva Conventions of 1949, exist to deal with this humanitarian issue.

Fifthly, the report referred to the Secretary-General's preparedness to resume dialogue with Iraq. We would like to recall that it was Iraq that proposed that a dialogue with the Secretary-General be initiated. The first round was held in February 2001, and it was agreed that the second round would be held the following month. However, the Secretary-General called for the postponing of that dialogue and, on 23 July 2001, declared that the second round of the dialogue would be held once the Security Council had finalized its deliberations. He also said that beginning another round of dialogue would have adverse consequences at a time when the Council was attempting to determine which direction to take.

For our part, we believe that dialogue with the Secretary-General must not be linked to political pressures brought to bear in the Security Council — pressures that have prevented the Council from fulfilling its commitments to Iraq. This is because of the American threat of the use of the veto against any draft resolution aimed at restoring Iraq's rights, in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council itself. In this connection, I should like to recall here the responsibilities of the Secretary-General under Article 99 of the Charter.

Sixth, the Secretary-General, in paragraph 109 of the report, refers to the "oil-for-food" programme. In this connection, we would like to make the following comments.

First, the Secretary-General states that the Government of Iraq's delays in contracting humanitarian supplies and equipment are of great concern. Regrettably, that reference is inaccurate. Despite the tremendous difficulties and complex

bureaucratic mechanisms surrounding the contracting process, beginning with the dispatch of tenders to firms and ending with the dispatch of those contracts to the Committee established under Security Council resolution 661 (1990), the Iraqi side has signed all the allocations for all the various sectors, at all stages of the process. Indeed, the Office of the Iraq Programme warned recently that some of the contracts actually exceed their allocations.

This is at a time when the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding and the "oil-for-food" programme is experiencing continuous obstacles from the United States and Britain as contracts worth more than $4 billion are put on hold. These are humanitarian contracts. More than $2 billion in contracts have been hindered by the Office of the Iraq Programme, under the pretext of review. This is in addition to the subversive role played by the representatives of the United States and Britain in the sanctions committee established under Security Council resolution 661 (1990) with regard to the implementation of the different aspects of the Memorandum of Understanding. They have objected to expanding the "green lists", they have impeded the adoption of oil pricing and cash earmarked for improving the oil sector, and lately they have tried to use this programme to collect information about Iraq and to threaten its security and safety.

In this connection, we would like to refer to paragraph 56 of the Secretary-General's note, entitled "The right to food", document A/56/210, which states,

> "With regard to the principle that food should not be used as an instrument of political and economic pressure, the case of Iraq is important. There can be little doubt that subjecting the Iraqi people to a harsh economic embargo since 1991 has placed the United Nations in a clear violation of the obligation to respect the right to food of people in Iraq. This is the opinion of, among others, Denis Halliday, a former Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations and former Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, and of Marc Bossuyt, in his working paper on the adverse consequences of economic sanctions on the enjoyment of human rights, submitted to the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 2000."

This behaviour and these policies mar the role of the United Nations in Iraq. The international Organization and its Secretariat must, therefore, adopt an equitable and impartial position towards Iraq. The continuation of this situation victimizes innocent civilians in Iraq. United Nations sanctions have killed more than 1.5 million Iraqi citizens. The situation substantially diminishes the credibility of the United Nations and its role, as specified in the Charter. It also creates a dangerous precedent by allowing the use of food as a means of social and economic pressure, and by ignoring continuous aggression over a 10-year period against an independent State and a founding Member of the United Nations.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to draw the attention of the General Assembly to the fact that States are not allowed to exaggerate or distort the Secretary-General's report to serve their own interests. This is what the representative of Kuwait did when he claimed that the Secretary-General in his latest report has held the Iraqi Government responsible for lack of progress and for delays in lifting sanctions against Iraq. This is not contained in the report. The representative of Kuwait used the report of the Secretary-General to offend my country. This happens at a time when the representative of Kuwait and his Government should be governed by logic and not participate in daily aggressions against Iraq, and not allow its territory to be used by American and British aircraft to bomb Iraqi civilians. Kuwait could have accepted Iraq's offer to peacefully resolve the question of Iraqi and Kuwaiti missing persons through the Arab League. That is logic itself.

In conclusion, my delegation is of the view that the United Nations must pay due attention to the question of Palestine because of its direct and serious impact on international peace and security. Regrettably, the report of the Secretary-General does not reflect this matter in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. The report does not refer to the long-standing atrocious terrorist practices carried out by the Zionist entity against the defenceless Palestinian people. Similarly, the report does not refer to the Security Council's failure to provide international protection for the Palestinian people.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election. Norway stands ready to cooperate fully with him as he carries out his important responsibilities.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his excellent report on the work of the Organization.

At the outset of the report, the Secretary-General states that the United Nations, during the past year, has witnessed striking contrasts on the international scene, both encouraging developments and dangerous threats. On 11 September, we witnessed acts of heinous terrorism here in our host country. Those who lost their lives or were injured on that fateful day will always live in our memories.

The Secretary-General has underlined the need to make prevention the focal point of this Organization. The Security Council has joined in these efforts, and its President issued a statement on 20 February saying, "a well planned and coordinated peace-building strategy can play a significant role in conflict prevention" (*S/PRST/2001/5*).

Norway strongly endorses this approach to international peace-building, realizing that the world needs to examine the underlying causes of conflicts in order to build a lasting peace. Fighting poverty, underdevelopment and environmental degradation must be at the top of our agenda. The world must also be willing to meet its humanitarian commitments.

In his report, the Secretary-General states that the turn of the millennium, sadly enough, has not been accompanied by a reduction in the suffering caused by natural disasters and complex emergencies throughout the world. Vulnerable civilian populations continue to be deliberate targets of violence. The report refers to the conflicts that have continued in Afghanistan, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and Sudan, while crises have escalated or erupted in, for example, Burundi, Indonesia, Liberia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

As in earlier reports, the Secretary-General deals extensively with the situation in Africa. As outlined by the Secretary-General, the United Nations is involved in a large number of development programmes and other activities in Africa. We agree with the Secretary-General that Africa's problems must remain of the highest priority to the Organization.

Norway continues to be gravely concerned over the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which the Secretary-General calls a catastrophe of global proportions. By late 2000, over 36 million adults and children were living with HIV/AIDS, while 22 million had died of the virus. We share the Secretary-General's concern that this is resulting in the destruction of the social fabric in the most affected countries, reversing years of declining death rates.

Africa is the continent most affected by the spread of HIV/AIDS. In sub-Saharan Africa the epidemic is now the leading cause of death. There has also been a rapid increase in HIV infections in Eastern Europe and South and East Asia. The overall situation is of the greatest concern to us all.

On 11 September the world witnessed horrifying terrorist attacks here in the United States. The attacks were not merely aimed at the American Government; they were also aimed at hurting and weakening the democratic world as a whole. The world needs to stand united in the fight against terrorism. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council acted with urgency and determination after the terrorist attacks of 11 September. More needs to be done. Norway therefore looks forward to the discussion on this issue here in the General Assembly on 1 October.

A natural focal point in the United Nations in the continuation of this process is to give even higher priority to the development and strengthening of the international legal order. In the work of preventing further atrocities like the attacks of 11 September, it is of the utmost importance that the international community is able to identify and hold accountable those responsible.

Norway notes, and shares, the Secretary-General's optimism regarding the ratification process for the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court. The International Criminal Court has the potential to become a vital instrument of international law and justice, and Norway welcomes its early establishment.

In the first chapter of his report, the Secretary-General gives a broad description of the work done by the United Nations around the world in its peace-building efforts. The elections recently held in East Timor are among the many successes in those long-term efforts. Nonetheless, the situation elsewhere — and especially in the Middle East — raises serious concern. The Secretary-General describes the situation in the region as the worst crisis since the signing of the Oslo Agreement in 1993.

The outbreak of violence in occupied Palestinian territory and in Israel since late September 2000 has brought extensive loss of life on both sides. Norway fully supports the Secretary-General in his decision to devote much of his time to addressing this particular crisis, and encourages him to continue his efforts in that respect.

Finally, we appreciate the Secretary-General's continued efforts in pursuing management reform within the United Nations. It is crucial for the Organization to be able to address the shifting and challenging tasks that lie ahead, and to do so in an effective manner. In saying that, I should add that we are impressed by the Secretary-General's tireless efforts in streamlining the United Nations system.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): We, too, commend the Secretary-General on his report.

We also take this opportunity to again extend Australia's condolences to those who suffered as a result of the attacks in this city on 11 September.

The international environment has undergone a fundamental, paradigm shift in the two weeks since 11 September. Member States of the United Nations, and the Organization as a whole, now face unprecedented and demanding challenges. This fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly will be like no other before it. There is an immediate need to reassess our priorities and to refocus our energies in order to maintain and improve the United Nations capacity to find constructive solutions to urgent global issues.

Australia joined with other nations in condemning the outrageous and cowardly terrorist attacks in this city and Washington earlier this month. We believe strongly that Article 51 of the United Nations Charter and Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), of 12 September, give the necessary legal authority to respond to those acts, including through the use of armed force.

For the first time ever, we in Australia have invoked the Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States (ANZUS), and stand ready to support the United States and other allies in taking whatever steps are judged necessary to bring the perpetrators of this and other acts of international terrorism to justice.

The fight against terrorism requires international cooperation. The international community has expressed its opposition to terrorism many times, perhaps most notably in the United Nations Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which states the "unequivocal condemnation" by all States Members of the United Nations

> "of all acts, methods and practices of terrorism, as criminal and unjustifiable" (*resolution 49/60, annex, para. 1*).

As important as those words are, they are not sufficient. Despite universal condemnation of terrorism, some States appear to have maintained their links with terrorist groups, and a few are still willing to offer sanctuary to terrorist leaders. This is unacceptable and cannot continue. Australia calls on all States to sever those links and to join the fight in deed as well as in word.

Existing instruments and institutions provide a sound starting point for strengthened international cooperation. We note paragraph 224 of the Secretary-General's report, which welcomes the ratifications of and accessions to the 12 existing global conventions for the suppression and elimination of international terrorism, and notes the continuing work towards a comprehensive convention against terrorism. Australia is already a party to 9 of the 12 existing conventions, and is actively considering becoming a party to the remaining instruments. We consider that a concerted effort must be made to conclude the negotiations on a comprehensive convention against terrorism at the forthcoming session of the working group in order to strengthen the international regime. Australia will give its full support to that objective.

Australia stands ready to support all efforts to bring perpetrators of terrorist acts to justice. We urge the United Nations as a whole to attach the highest priority to this issue at the current session and beyond.

As the Secretary-General has stated, one of the strengths of the United Nations system is its capacity to adjust to changing international conditions. He has rightly observed that the Organization can remain effective only if it preserves that tradition of innovation. Nowhere is this more strongly illustrated than in the United Nations role in East Timor.

Two years ago, the Security Council entrusted the United Nations with comprehensive responsibility for managing and supporting East Timor's transition to a stable, viable and democratic State governed by an

effective administration. With the support of the international community, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) has made significant progress towards fulfilling that mandate, including through the progressive transfer of government responsibilities to the East Timorese. The election on 30 August of a Constituent Assembly and the swearing in of the new transitional Government on 20 September were further critical milestones in that process.

To date, East Timor has been a success story for the United Nations, but the Organization's role is not yet complete. Australia fully endorses the Secretary-General's judgement in his report that East Timor will require a substantial international presence after independence if the transition to an effective democratic administration is to be completed. We fully share the Secretary-General's view that this international presence should be provided through an integrated United Nations mission comprising civilian, civilian police and peacekeeping components under a single Security Council mandate and funded from United Nations assessed contributions.

That is the most coherent and practical approach that can be taken to handle the tasks and challenges that still lie ahead. Its implementation will require the United Nations as a whole to take further innovative and creative approaches to East Timor, notably in the matter of resources. It would be tragic to jeopardize a longer-term peaceful and sustainable outcome for East Timor, and to waste the significant investment the international community has made so far, by failing to provide adequate support after independence.

The credibility of the United Nations as the caretaker of East Timor's transition is at stake. The Organization and all of its Members have a responsibility to protect that credibility, including through sensible but creative decisions on critical issues about the future United Nations presence in the coming months. Australia will do all it can to support such decisions.

Finally, I turn to another urgent global issue to which the United Nations will need increasingly to apply a constructive, innovative and flexible approach. That is the issue of people-smuggling, and, although it is not specifically addressed in this report of the Secretary-General, we hope it will attract increased attention in the future. This is a growing area of transnational criminal activity that trades on people's hopes and fears and exploits existing international agreements that were designed for humanitarian purposes.

People-smuggling is an issue of particular importance in Australia, but it is also of increasing global concern. It is a problem that is beyond the ability of any country or organization to solve unilaterally. As such it must be addressed nationally, regionally and globally. A coordinated international approach is required both at the source of the problem — where many factors cause people to leave and, in many cases, to flee their homes — and in transit and destination countries that facilitate smuggling operations. We need also to examine existing international conventions and norms to ensure that they do not inadvertently create opportunities for people-smugglers.

The United Nations has an important and increasing role to play in dealing with critical elements of that new and disturbing situation, including through a renewed focus and more coordinated response to the criminal gangs that prey on people's hopes and fears.

Australia also supports efforts to address the problem of outflow at its source. Accordingly, we welcome the joint initiative by Mr. Lubbers, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to convene a forum on Afghan refugees following the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to be held in Geneva early next month. For our part, in addition to Australia's considerable national and regional efforts to address the issue of people-smuggling, we strongly encourage a renewed and more coordinated focus on the issue by the United Nations as a whole and by UNHCR in particular.

Mr. de Ruyt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I make this statement on behalf of the European Union. The associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me, first of all, to congratulate the President and the members of the Bureau on their elections, and to wish them every success in their tasks.

The President has already demonstrated, in the first two weeks of the fifty-sixth session, remarkable efficiency and speed of action in the face of the tragic events that upset the plans he had drawn up for the next few months.

The entire world agrees that the terrorist attacks of 11 September marked a turning point in the history of our times. The world has changed and nothing will ever be exactly the same again. The challenge before us is one of global proportions. The solidarity we have shown towards the United States must also be shown in the fight we shall have to wage against terrorism. For my country and the members of the European Union — and, I believe, for the great majority of States represented here — it is now clear that that the United Nations will have to play an essential role in that fight and that, in the weeks and months to come, our energies will have to be focused on the consequences of those unspeakable acts of aggression.

As the heads of State and Government of the European Union stated on the occasion of their extraordinary Council session last Friday, the attacks of 11 September are an assault on our open, democratic, tolerant and multicultural societies, and are a challenge to the conscience of every human being. The European Council considered that, on the basis of Security Council resolution 1368 (2001), a response by the United States was legitimate. It also decided that the Union would cooperate with the United States to bring to justice and punish the perpetrators, sponsors and accomplices of those barbaric acts.

The member States of the European Union are prepared to undertake such action according to their individual means. Those actions must be targeted and could be directed against States abetting, supporting or harbouring terrorists. Our commitment is therefore unambiguous, as should be that of the entire international community in the face of actions for which no justification is acceptable.

As this meeting has replaced the general debate, which should have taken place this week, allow me, in the name of the European Union, to extend my sincere condolences to the representative of the Government of the United States, as well as to the many who have been directly or indirectly affected by this tragedy. I would also like to extend my condolences to the representatives of States whose citizens are among the victims. Those of us who by virtue of our profession are New Yorkers by adoption will for a long time remain traumatized by the events that took place two weeks ago. That emotion should help us to respond strongly and with unity to the desire of our Governments that the United Nations should play a prominent role in the struggle against terrorism.

Like many leaders throughout the world, the heads of State and Government of the European Union, at their meeting last Friday, called on us to set up, under the aegis of the United Nations, the largest possible global coalition against this scourge. The primary responsibility lies, without any doubt, with the Security Council, which last week adopted a very strong resolution, but since the call is addressed to all States, it is essential that we also act in our Assembly.

As I said earlier, the response to the terrorist threat can only be global and multilateral, and it is in that spirit that the European Union has requested that a substantial debate on the fight against international terrorism take place in the Assembly beginning next week. We sincerely wish to thank the President and, through him, all the Member States of the United Nations that have unanimously accepted this proposal. I call upon everyone to prepare carefully for that debate, which will itself help to prepare for the general debate in November, which we would also like to see focused on this subject.

The current debate on the report on the work of the Organization gives us an opportunity to speak on the activities of the United Nations during the past year, but it also allows us to state our views on what should be the priorities for its future activities. We are pleased that the President inscribed this item as the first of the plenary session of the General Assembly.

Clearly, the first priority is the Millennium Declaration and the road map that has just been presented to us for implementation. The clear and precise aims solemnly reaffirmed by our heads of State and Government at the Millennium Summit should be pursued with perseverance, in particular those regarding the maintenance of peace and security, development, poverty eradication, and respect for human rights, for democracy and for good governance.

With that road map, we now have at our disposal an instrument that is both analytical and operational, one that will guide most of the work carried out under the aegis of the Assembly. We can accept the document as it is, but that does not mean that we entirely agree

with every aspect. However, it is an indispensable tool for maintaining unity of action and the spirit of the Millennium Declaration. We therefore call for it to be used to the full.

The European Union, just like the Secretary-General in the report before us, is deeply concerned by the persistence of humanitarian crises in several regions of the world. Civilian populations continue to be the first victims of armed conflict and to bear the heaviest burden. Together with the Secretary-General, the European Union is outraged at, and concerned about, acts of violence carried out against humanitarian personnel, and therefore supports the process under way in the United Nations to reinforce the safety of humanitarian personnel. It calls upon all Member States and actors involved to respond to the Secretary-General's appeal for a return to a culture of protection for civilians. It also welcomes the work undertaken by inter-organizational networks aimed at improving the situation of internally displaced persons.

As the Assembly is aware, the European Union also places particular importance on the defence and promotion of human rights. It welcomes the reinforcement of the partnership between the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other parts of the United Nations system. This has enabled humanitarian and peacekeeping operations to be more aware of human rights violations. We welcome the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the signature of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Finally, we heartily encourage the process of gender mainstreaming under way in the United Nations system.

In response to the Secretary-General's appeal, the European Union is committed to maintaining the political momentum in defence of the rights of the child on the occasion of the next special session on children.

With regard to the Durban Conference against Racism, the European Union played an important role and is proud to have contributed, after long and difficult debate, to the success of the Conference — something that was essential given the hopes raised among those who today still suffer from the effects of long-standing racist attitudes or who are still subject to racial discrimination in their daily lives.

Development, sustainable development, the fight against poverty and specific action to benefit the least developed countries remain, as indicated in the report, priority objectives of our Organization. We welcome the efforts made in the past year. We were particularly pleased with the success of the special session of the General Assembly on AIDS, which put the fight against this scourge at the forefront of our concerns, both at the level of States and at the levels of private industry and the medical community.

The European Union was particularly active in the preparations for, and holding of, the conference on the least developed countries, which took place in Brussels in May this year. We are therefore particularly interested in the follow-up to the decisions taken at that conference, particularly in the area of trade liberalization. We also attach particular importance to the preparations for the Conference on Financing for Development. In that respect, we would like to draw the attention of partners to the substantial efforts that are still necessary to identify priority areas of action where progress could be made in Monterrey, and to mobilize the attention and political will of our Governments.

I would like to conclude by recalling the remarkable progress made by the United Nations in the year under review to improve the efficiency of the Organization in the areas of peacekeeping and crisis management.

The Brahimi report served as the launch pad for our work, whose results, although not entirely meeting our expectations, will make it possible for the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to respond better to the challenges before it, challenges whose scope continues to surpass our collective means. But the United Nations has also done good work in the field in the past year. Among other things, I wish to mention the restoring of the difficult operation in Sierra Leone, the success of the operations in East Timor, Ethiopia and Eritrea and, finally, the long-awaited launch of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), an operation closely followed by the European Union.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has substantially improved over recent months. We hope that the Congolese parties will be able to sustain the momentum of the Gaborone meeting, and

that the signatories to the Lusaka Agreement will commit themselves to solving through dialogue the problems standing in the way of the full implementation of the commitments undertaken.

The United Nations, with the European Union, the United States and other actors, bears a large responsibility in the actions of the international community to restore peace in the Balkans. Cooperation between international organizations functioned well throughout the past year. It was intended, among other things, to help the Republic of Yugoslavia to manage the post-Milosevic era. Above all, it enabled us to contain the growing crisis in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which threatened to destroy all the efforts to maintain multi-ethnicity as a basic tenet, together with respect for borders and regional cooperation, on which the future of this still too unstable region must be built.

The elections to take place soon in Kosovo are a new and difficult step on the road that should lead all countries in the region towards the European Union. We have full confidence in the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), which to date has carried out its task in a remarkably balanced and determined way to help the inhabitants of that territory to learn to live together on the basis of democratic institutions.

Beyond what I have mentioned, there remain worrying trouble spots in the world where, for various reasons, our Organization is less present. I am thinking, for example, of Burundi, West Africa and, of course, the Middle East, where the attention of the entire international community remains focused even after the events of 11 September.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, beyond the suffering it brings to the civilian populations, also weighs heavily on the stability of the region. We strongly encourage the parties to seize the opportunity before them today to rejoin the path of peace through direct dialogue on the implementation of the recommendations of the Fact-Finding Committee, which should allow the earliest possible resumption of negotiations on the final status of the occupied territories.

Most of the problems mentioned in the Secretary-General's report continue to mobilize our Organization's efforts. We should give him the means to carry out his task effectively, which involves not only fighting against waste and bad management, but also making available adequate financial resources.

The events of 11 September affected us all deeply. They should now cause us to close ranks, to develop deeper solidarity, and to have more recourse to multilateralism to meet not only the challenge of international terrorism, but also all the challenges born of the growing globalization of international relations. The European Union will actively contribute to meeting the major challenges before us and to develop its solidarity in all aspects of United Nations action.

Mr. Mwakawago (United Republic of Tanzania): These are not propitious times. Since yesterday, when the debate began on the work of the Organization, the tragic events of 11 September have coloured our deliberations, and quite rightly so, given that over 60 countries have their nationals on the missing list as a consequence of the attack on, and the subsequent collapse of, the World Trade Center towers. Our host has suffered immeasurably. On behalf of my delegation, I send heartfelt sympathy and sincere condolences to all the families who have lost their dear ones, and to the Government and people of the United States of America. Our hearts go out to them and our prayers are with all of them.

Allow me to express our sincere congratulations to the President on his election to his high position. He can count on my delegation's support and cooperation.

Tanzania wishes to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for the manner in which he has presented the report on the work of the Organization. The report reviews the efforts of the Organization in terms of finding constructive solutions to the fundamental problems of our time, and with a sober recognition of the complexities of the tasks facing the Organization, and, more important, it attempts to underline the enduring significance of the United Nations as an instrument of global cooperation for the common good.

Many delegations have made some commendable contributions and raised some very interesting and pertinent concerns, whose perspectives we share. On the other hand, we agree with the Secretary-General's contention that

> "One of the United Nations strengths is its capacity to adjust to changing international conditions ... We must prepare for the possibilities of the future and meet the new

demands made on the United Nations." (*A/56/1, para. 3*)

However, we wish to specifically underscore some of our own concerns, one of which is Africa's challenge of protecting and assisting refugees. As is widely known, Tanzania has over the years continued to be host to thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries. Their presence in the country creates an additional, heavy financial burden for my country, to say nothing of the security concerns, environmental degradation, and theft and violence perpetrated against our people. Anybody reading paragraph 115 of the report might conclude that Tanzania is hosting only around 100,000 refugees. The truth of the matter is that we are currently hosting over 500,000 from Burundi, over 170,000 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and over 10,000 from Rwanda. The point that my delegation would like to make is that there is an urgent need to ascertain the correct number of refugees worldwide and to recognize the tremendous burden on host countries.

My Government is very appreciative of the assistance it receives from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other non-governmental organizations, as well as other Governments. The needs of refugees are great, but those of the nationals in the regions hosting them are even greater. It is therefore important that the question of refugees should receive serious attention from the international community. A piecemeal approach, while offering temporary respite, does not address the really critical questions.

Let me turn to my dear continent, Africa. The report of the Secretary-General devotes 12 paragraphs to Africa. I wish here to emphasize that now that African leaders have adopted the New African Initiative as the beacon of a continental strategy for development, and bearing in mind the appeal of world leaders in the Millennium Declaration of September 2000 for support for Africa, the stage is now set for meaningful cooperation. Africa is determined to be the master of its own development. It is incumbent upon the international community and the United Nations to form a new partnership that will speed up the development engine. Africa needs additional resources and technology.

The issues of conflict prevention, peacemaking and peace-building are very important to the African continent, where civil wars and conflicts have continued to be the order of the day in many countries. We are happy that the Secretary-General devoted a good portion of his report to discussing this important issue. Indeed, we share the Secretary-General's view that

> "While comprehensive and coherent conflict prevention strategies offer the greatest potential for promoting lasting peace, they have never been easy to formulate or to implement." (*ibid., para. 20*)

Nonetheless, it is my delegation's hope that all the agreements that have been concluded after very painstaking negotiations will be adhered to by all concerned. We owe it to the peoples affected to give peace a chance.

The Secretary-General's report touches on the thorny issue of poverty. In paragraph 129 we are made to understand that the international community resolved to wage war on poverty by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality for everyone. The Millennium Declaration raised the expectations of over 1 billion people living on less than $1 per day. Concrete programmes and actions need to be worked out as a matter of urgency.

But, as the report goes on to underline, if the international community is to meet its goals of development and poverty eradication, economic growth in developing economies must accelerate. Again, while we recognize that the challenge is primarily ours, international support is critical in our common fight against poverty. This will entail, among other things, forging partnerships with other members of the international community. Africa and the least developed countries will continue to bank on the steadfast support and understanding of the developed countries until our countries have attained the level of self-reliance necessary to enable them to make significant contributions on their own.

In conclusion, allow me to make some brief remarks about the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which continues to be, as the Secretary-General correctly put it in paragraph 146 of his report, "a catastrophe of global proportions". While it is true that the HIV/AIDS pandemic is a global problem, Africa is the continent most profoundly affected by it. More than 25.3 million people are living with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan

Africa, thus making it the leading cause of death in that part of the globe.

Given its limited capacity, Africa cannot afford to be left on its own in the fight against HIV/AIDS. In other words, in order to be able to halt the spread of HIV/AIDS by the year 2015, as the world leaders resolved to undertake at the Millennium Summit had resolved to undertake to do, Africa must be assisted in terms of building its capacity to tackle the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and of other infectious diseases associated with it. We wish to commend the efforts deployed by the United Nations in terms of pursuing various initiatives aimed at assisting Governments in defeating this scourge. We also wish to commend and express our deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the continued system-wide efforts to address the various aspects of the HIV/AIDS crisis.

The Secretary-General's report shows that a lot has been achieved and that a great deal more remains to be done. The goals have been set, and the direction is clear. It is our considered view that, without adequate follow-up mechanisms, many of the goals will remain pure rhetoric. Let us resolve to move to the next level.

Mr. Kerim (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): Since this is the first time that I am taking the floor during this session of the General Assembly, allow me to congratulate Mr Han on his assumption of the presidency of the fifty-sixth session. My delegation is confident that under his skilful guidance, we will bring this challenging session of the General Assembly to a successful conclusion. Let me assure him also of my delegation's full support. My congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau.

I would like also to avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to the Secretary-General upon his re-election. The report we are discussing is further proof that the right decision has been made.

In the wake of the tragic events of 11 September, our debate cannot be regarded as business as usual. I would rather call it an hour of trial. Once again we are confronted with the sad truth and a bitter comprehension of the dark side of human nature. The perpetrators of this odious crime were blinded by hatred. We, for our part, must always keep our eyes wide open and not allow our conscience to be awakened only on occasion. Therefore, it is necessary to scrutinize the consequences of international terrorism and to undertake appropriate measures in both the short and long run.

Let me express, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Macedonia, our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of all the innocent victims of those barbaric terrorist attacks and convey our full solidarity and support to the Government of the United States and the American people.

This merciless carnage and senseless destruction was, at the same time, an attack against the fundamental values of our Organization and what it stands for — that is, democracy, freedom, tolerance and humanity. My country, the Republic of Macedonia, will work closely with the United States, the European Union and all partners to combat international terrorism. All international organizations, particularly the United Nations, must be engaged in the forefront of this struggle.

I should now like to come back to the actual topic of our discussion today, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. In our view, the Secretary-General's report and the road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration should be considered as a whole. The Secretary-General deserves special acknowledgement for taking an approach which makes the report less of a review and more of a forward-looking document. The report is comprehensive and coherent, and it provides an opportunity to devote special attention to the issues we consider as being of utmost priority for the work of the Organization.

It goes without saying that the role of the United Nations, and that of the Security Council in particular, in the maintenance of international peace and security remains of paramount importance. In our increasingly globalized world, none of the crucial issues we are dealing with, in particular those related to peace and security, can be resolved solely within a national framework. As rightly pointed out in the road map, there is a need for concerted action against international terrorism. This can be accomplished, in our view, by not only signing and ratifying all of the relevant international conventions and by completing work on the remaining texts that are being drafted, but also by setting up an international anti-terrorism network that will operate worldwide.

My delegation supports the efforts to strengthen the capacities of the United Nations peacekeeping

operations and to improve coordination within the United Nations system, as recommended in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. The focus should be on conflict prevention. The Republic of Macedonia, as the host of the first preventive mission in United Nations history, is ready to share its positive experience to that effect.

Furthermore, let me stress the need for enhanced institutional cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, as set out in the Millennium Declaration, to cope with the emerging challenges in different parts of the world. While recognizing the fact that the Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, we believe that the United Nations in general can only benefit from strengthening institutionalized cooperation with the relevant regional and subregional organizations.

We agree with the view of the Secretary-General that the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Programme of Action that was adopted there represent a significant first step at the global level towards the goal of preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. However, we deem that there is a need for an enhanced follow-up process. The problem of small arms and their proliferation has been of particular concern to the Republic of Macedonia and the broader region, especially after the civil unrest in Albania and the conflict in Kosovo. This poses a serious threat not only to the security and stability of my country, but also to the broader region. Therefore, it is necessary to take strong action to combat the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons.

In terms of priorities, enhancing the capacities of the United Nations in mobilizing resources for development and poverty eradication deserves our special attention. In this regard, my delegation has high expectations that the preparation process leading to the Financing for Development Conference in Monterrey in March 2002 will have a positive outcome and will address the specific concerns of countries with economies in transition.

There is a need to build stronger partnerships with other relevant organizations beyond the United Nations system, such as the World Trade Organization, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the business community, non-governmental organizations and others, in order to have them closely engaged in the process. The fact that every fourth Member State of our Organization is classified as a least developed country is certainly no credit to us all. That is why this issue has to be given the highest priority. We also look forward to the upcoming Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held next year in Johannesburg, South Africa, to review the progress in the implementation of Agenda 21.

Finally, allow me to make a few comments on the parts of the report related to my country, the Republic of Macedonia. At the very outset of the crisis, the Republic of Macedonia approached the United Nations, asking for close cooperation in order to prevent spillover effects from the immediate neighbourhood and to secure the northern border of Macedonia from the Kosovo side, and recalling the need for full implementation of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The Security Council and Secretary-General responded in a timely manner, and resolution 1345 (2001) was adopted. Within this context, we deem it to be of crucial importance to emphasize the role of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in combating organized crime and terrorist activities originating from Kosovo.

The Framework Agreement, aimed at overcoming the serious political and security crisis in the Republic of Macedonia, envisages an active role for the international community in facilitating, monitoring and assisting in its implementation. Within this context, it is necessary to ensure the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes within the shortest possible time frame. In that regard, we highly value the continuous assistance that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are providing.

The lessons that have to be drawn from the situation in the Republic of Macedonia are as follows: Macedonia's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be preserved; there are no territorial solutions to ethnic issues; the use of violence in the pursuit of political aims should be rejected completely; the multi-ethnic character of society must be preserved. These principles, in our view, should serve as the basis for the assessments and activities of the United Nations,

particularly the Security Council and the Secretary-General in their future activities, in a spirit of close cooperation with the Macedonian authorities.

In conclusion, once again I would like to assure the Secretary-General of my delegation's full support in his endeavours to strengthen the role and relevance of our Organization in the forthcoming period.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): I should like to thank the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his comprehensive and insightful annual report on the work of the United Nations and for his important statement to begin our discussion of this agenda item.

My delegation is very grateful that the Secretary-General's annual report contains a thorough review of the efforts of the United Nations, which has been done in order to identify sustainable and workable solutions to the many challenges that confront humanity as a whole. In light of the complexities of the challenges, we also commend the Secretary-General for the programme of work he proposed in his report (A/56/326) to the General Assembly entitled "Road map towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration". My delegation will give its comments on that report when the Assembly considers it later this year.

The report clearly shows that, in our increasingly globalized world of today, the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of sustainable development and social justice are closely linked, and that the critical issues we are facing cannot be resolved solely within a national framework. We fully support the Secretary-General's view that development cooperation is a solid foundation on which to build stability and economic and social development. We further add that the United Nations is the most suitable instrument to galvanize the common efforts of nations in this task.

I wish to underline that my country fully supports the essential role of the United Nations in the maintenance of world peace and security. We welcome the focus of the United Nations on conflict prevention and peace-building, and emphasize that the United Nations should make greater efforts to address the root causes of conflicts in a comprehensive and consistent manner. It is true that in peacekeeping and peace-building central priority should be given to conflict prevention, as it would be much more costly and harder to settle conflicts once they have occurred. We note with satisfaction that a good number of steps have been taken by the United Nations in this direction.

The report also touches upon the question of sanctions, underscoring that they should not precipitate humanitarian distress that undermines the viability of the policy and of the instrument itself. The report also highlights the adverse effects of such regimes on innocent populations and third parties. Viet Nam strongly believes that sanctions are blunt instruments and should be invoked only with caution, and with well-defined objectives and time frames. Indefinitely imposed, such tools will be counter-productive and serve no legitimate purposes. In this connection, we welcome the recent efforts made by the Security Council to develop benchmarks for smart sanctions. We urge the Council to put these regimes under regular periodic reviews and to lift those sanctions that have brought about unwanted and adverse impacts, particularly on innocent people and neighbouring countries.

Viet Nam has been a persistent proponent of nuclear disarmament, and we are pleased that the Secretary-General reiterates the world leaders' resolve and endeavour to eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Viet Nam shares the concerns that the continuing divergence of views among States on priorities and perspectives continues to block further progress on global security and disarmament.

My delegation also wishes to join the Secretary-General in calling on Member States to work together to realize the historic agreements reached at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We share as well his concerns over the plans to deploy national missile defences, which may lead to another arms race. As regards the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Viet Nam fully supports the Secretary-General's appeal to States to work harder on the issues on which the Conference failed to achieve consensus, as well as to act upon the key recommendations agreed in the Programme of Action.

A great portion of the report deals with the questions of cooperation for development. We fully agree that development is a huge challenge to many countries and to the United Nations itself. The report once again emphasizes the determination of the

international community to wage war on poverty and to launch a sustainable campaign to make the right to development a reality for everyone. In this campaign, the report focuses on the efforts to render globalization inclusive and equitable as a key way to reach the goals of development and poverty eradication. We fully subscribe to this approach.

Although there is now much less enthusiasm about the benefits of globalization as more adverse impacts are revealed, there is no question that globalization remains a powerful and dynamic force for growth and development. Globalization opens up market opportunities, expands technological transfers to developing countries and gives them much-needed financial resources through investments. It is of utmost importance that a favourable environment for development be created to enable the developing countries to take part in the global economy.

My delegation is satisfied with the thematic and analytical overview of the work of the Organization presented in the report of the Secretary-General. Let me conclude by stressing once again our continued support for the Secretary-General's leadership in his second term of office in our efforts to strengthen the United Nations, to make our Organization a better instrument of all Member States and to enable it to deal effectively with the challenges of our world today.

Finally, I wish to join the Secretary-General and many others who have spoken before me to express our profound sympathy to the victims of the vicious terrorist attack and to the people and Government of the United States of America.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Bilman (Turkey): I apologize for taking the floor at this hour, but I can assure the Assembly that I will be very brief.

It has come to my delegation's attention that, during this morning's debate, a speaker took the floor and, with reference to paragraph 39 of the Secretary-General's report, repeated a litany of his well-known allegations regarding the Turkish Cypriots. I just want to say that I believe that the Turkish Cypriot authorities will properly respond to those allegations in due course.

Mr. Al-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): A few minutes ago, my delegation heard the statement made by the representative of Iraq. It is important for us to underline some of the misinformation contained in that statement.

From the outset, my delegation wishes to stress its full commitment to the statement made yesterday by the Ambassador of Kuwait. I reaffirm that Kuwait did not affront Iraq in its statement. We merely referred to the Secretary-General's report on Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions, as reflected in paragraph 31. We call on Member States to reread that paragraph. We neither misquoted it nor distorted any fact, as the representative of Iraq alleged.

As for the issue of Kuwaiti missing persons and prisoners of war, we would make the following points. Relevant Security Council resolutions on Iraq and Kuwait in no way refer to Iraqi missing persons. However, resolutions 686 (1991), 687 (1991) and 1284 (1999) call on Iraq to extend all necessary cooperation to the International Committee of the Red Cross to facilitate the repatriation of all Kuwaiti and third country prisoners of war and missing persons. Nowhere is reference made to Iraqi missing.

Nevertheless, the Tripartite Commission, entrusted with the humanitarian follow-up to the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners of war, agreed to discuss the issue of Iraqi missing. Iraq's accusation that the Security Council is biased and has ignored the issue of Iraqi missing is therefore false. The Tripartite Commission, created by the Security Council and to which Iraq is a party, has taken up the issue, although the Council itself has never raised the issue of Iraqi missing. The Tripartite Commission was established under resolutions of the Security Council in order to repatriate Kuwaiti missing.

Since the end of the war to liberate Kuwait, we have yet to see our missing. The issue of Kuwaiti and third country missing can be resolved only through Security Council resolutions. Iraq's so-called peaceful overtures are merely attempts to circumvent the Security Council's resolutions. We want the problem of

Kuwaiti missing persons to be resolved in conformity with Security Council resolutions. The initiatives claimed by representatives of Iraq are nothing more than an attempt to evade Security Council resolutions: initiatives are announced, then immediately withdrawn the minute that there is any insistence on compliance with relevant Council resolutions.

We firmly reject persistent Iraqi accusations against Kuwait concerning the use of United States and British aircraft flying from Kuwait to attack Iraqi civilians. No aircraft take off from Kuwait to attack Iraqi civilians. We all recall that at one time it was Iraqi aircraft that attacked Iraqi civilians.

Mr. Hadjiargyrou (Cyprus): I regret that I have to take the floor in response to the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Turkey. The representative of the Republic of Turkey referred to the statement of one delegation — meaning the statement of the Republic of Cyprus made earlier this morning — with reference to paragraph 39 of the report of the Secretary-General. Paragraph 29 refers to the situation in Cyprus, which has been on the United Nations agenda for a very long time. It is there because, for almost three decades, the Republic of Turkey has continued to militarily occupy part of Cypriot territory in violation of United Nations resolutions, including resolution 3212 (XXIX) of 1974, which was adopted unanimously.

The representative of Turkey, furthermore, stated that they would respond with a letter from the Turkish Cypriot authorities. I simply wanted to remind the Assembly that what the representative of Turkey means by "the Turkish Cypriot authorities" is an entity which has been declared legally invalid and which has no standing in this Organization. I want furthermore to say that this is not the first time that we have witnessed this practice by the Republic of Turkey, that is, circulating documents issued by an entity which has been condemned by the Security Council.

Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is taking the floor to clarify some facts concerning the points raised a moment ago by the Kuwaiti delegation. When the delegation of Kuwait yesterday attacked my country, Iraq did not ask to exercise its right of reply, because the item under discussion related to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization. But my delegation has now been forced to exercise its right of reply in the light of the misinformation and distortions uttered by the Kuwaiti delegation.

I say once again that States are not entitled to interpret in an exaggerated or distorted way statements made by the Secretary-General in his annual report; that would run counter to the diplomacy involved in our discussion of the report of the Secretary-General. My delegation agrees with the Kuwaiti delegation that States should have a chance to read the text of Kuwaiti speech and that of the report of the Secretary-General, especially paragraph 31. The Secretary-General did not hold Iraq internationally responsible, but the statement of the representative of Kuwait included a remark that was untrue: that the Secretary-General holds Iraq internationally responsible. That distorts the words of the Secretary-General.

Let me turn now to the question of Iraqi missing persons. Iraq abides by Security Council resolutions. For four years, Iraq participated in meetings of the Tripartite Commission and the Technical Subcommittee to discuss the matter of missing persons from Kuwait and from other States. In response to a request from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and in implementation of international humanitarian law, the matter of Iraqi missing persons has become part of the work of the Tripartite Commission, which periodically meets at Geneva, and of the Technical Subcommittee, which meets monthly in the Iraq-Kuwait border area. It was agreed to discuss the fate of Iraqi and Kuwaiti missing persons in line with international humanitarian law. Iraq then stated the need to give special attention to Iraqi missing persons — like that given to Kuwaiti and other missing persons. Within the United Nations, we do not disagree on that matter, because it conforms to international humanitarian law and with the work of the ICRC.

Iraq has taken many initiatives, but the representative of Kuwait says that we are evading our responsibilities and commitments. I want to state here that the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq has proposed that a bilateral dialogue between Iraq and Kuwait be held under the auspices of the League of Arab States. Kuwait did not agree to that proposal. I call here upon Kuwait to respond positively to the initiative put forward by the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs; we await a response. Only then will we know who is trying to evade discussion of this subject and who is seeking to exploit this humanitarian issue with a view to making political gains to harm Iraq and to

continue the sanctions imposed on it, thus inflicting pain and suffering on the Iraqi people. More than 1.5 million citizens have been victims, which runs counter to the principles and purposes of the United Nations.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Kuwait, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Awdi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am sorry to take the floor again, but I am obliged to do so in the light of certain facts. I did not attack Iraq in my statement, as the representative of Iraq has said; our statement is here and everyone has access to it.

Regarding the Secretary-General's information, one has only to look at paragraph 31, which addresses Iraq's non-compliance with Security Council resolutions and asks Iraq to reconsider its position if the sanctions against it are to be lifted. That country should read this paragraph in order to know what is contained therein. It refers to missing persons. Iraq talks about international and humanitarian law, and yet it did not wish to participate in the work of the Tripartite Commission. For political reasons, which I will not go into at present, Iraq does not shoulder its obligations. As we have said, it is Iraq that is not responding to the bilateral dialogue on Kuwaiti missing persons, including the latest initiative on a bilateral dialogue. We inform the Secretary-General that for us to sit down in a bilateral dialogue with Iraq, we must have assurances from Iraq that it possesses information on Kuwaiti missing persons. It is pointless to sit down in a bilateral dialogue with Iraq if Iraq does not have information. We have been involved in a dialogue thus far without obtaining anything. They have told us that they have 126 Kuwaiti prisoners but that they do not know where they are located.

My delegation has said, and repeats, that we have witnessed Iraq's attempts to evade its obligations regarding international humanitarian law and the Geneva Conventions in connection with Kuwaiti missing persons. This involves Security Council resolutions and the principles of international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions. I repeat this, and one needs only to read paragraph 31 of the Secretary-General's report to assess the veracity of my statements.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I call on the representative of Iraq, who wishes to speak a second time in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Kadhe (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for taking the floor again. However, I am compelled to do so to show the real truth.

Paragraph 31 of the Secretary-General's report includes much information. However, the Secretary-General never stated that Iraq is internationally responsible. While the statement made by the Ambassador of Kuwait quotes the Secretary-General as saying that Iraq is internationally responsible, that is erroneous. I repeat, erroneous. I leave it to States to ascertain the text of this paragraph. The report is before the Assembly.

In this Hall, I say and I repeat, there is not one Kuwaiti or non-Kuwaiti prisoner in Iraq. The Tripartite Commission and the Technical Subcommittee are looking into the issue of missing persons, not prisoners of war. As members all know, in Security Council resolution 687 (1991), the ceasefire resolution enjoined Iraq to release all prisoners of all nationalities. Iraq has indeed released all prisoners of war to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). They numbered over 5,000. Meetings were held in Riyadh, attended by Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, as well as by the ICRC, following the ceasefire in order to release the prisoners to the ICRC, and therefore that resolution was considered to have been implemented. The release of prisoners of war was one of the ceasefire conditions. Surely the representative of Kuwait knows that.

As for the statement that Iraq never provided any information on Kuwaiti prisoners of war, that is incorrect. Kuwait provided 5,000 names through the ICRC to the Government of Iraq, and we provided the relevant information to the Kuwaiti delegation. Out of 5,000 names on the initial list provided by Kuwait, 598 names remain. The current number of missing persons, according to Kuwaiti files, is 598. I call on the ICRC and on its representative, if it has a representative in this Hall, to kindly confirm or refute what I have just stated: 598 names remaining from a list of over 5,000 provided in 1991. That shows how much Iraq has cooperated in providing information to the ICRC. We are prepared to continue considering the issue of missing persons. It is definitely a humanitarian issue as long as it is not exploited for political ends, as is the case now with Kuwait.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.